

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS  
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 10/12/11 12:00 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	13
<b>Total</b>	20	13

# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:
  - (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
  - (2) The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.
  - (3) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to carry out the project evaluation effectively.

Note: We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

- (1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook and
- (2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

### Strengths:

The Conditions for Success constitute a working theory of change to help guide the evaluation.  
The School Success Rubric is helpful in determining the fidelity of the intervention.  
Matching criteria for the control group is clearly identified.  
State standardized test scores are used to identify student progress.

### Weaknesses:

The EOCTs cover multiple subject areas. There is no explanation of what success is. If the intervention is successful in raising 2 scores but 2 stay the same and 1 goes down, it is unclear if this would or would not be considered successful. No explicit definition of the minimum results necessary to believe the intervention is successful is provided. There are numerous ways to calculate dropout rates and graduation rates and they can produce significantly different results. The method of calculation or the source of the data if not calculated by the evaluator is not defined. While the number of college credits being acquired by treatment group students is tracked, there is no indication if comparison group students are also being tracked on this variable. Without a comparison group it will be difficult to determine the role of the intervention in the acquisition of college credit.

Reader's Score: 13

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## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	20	13
<b>Sub Total</b>	20	13
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# Technical Review Form

Panel #9 - 84.411C Tier 2 Panel - 9: 84.411C

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: KnowledgeWorks (U411C110296)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the project evaluation. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

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**Note:** We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation

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(2) IES/ NCEE Technical Methods papers.

### Strengths:

This evaluation will use a control group that is matched at the school level on a number of relevant variables for Treatment/Control group A and one of the control groups for group B. The selection among the B treatment and control groups is multi-faceted and takes advantage of the larger sample size of the school. This design contains a small RCT in the sense that students who are interested in participating will then be selected through a lottery system to participate; again taking advantage of the sample available in this school. In addition, a control group will be formed with students who did not want to participate to allow for investigations into differences between those who are and are not interested in participating. This design raises the rigor of the quasi-experimental design proposed and will allow for some causal inferences to be made.

Implementation fidelity questions are planned through interviews and observations which will provide information concerning fidelity and modifications that teachers and administrators may have made which can then be included in analyses to better understand dosage relationships with student outcomes.

Although fairly simplistic, the analytic strategies proposed are reasonable and where logistic regressions are proposed effect sizes will accompany the findings to provide the effect of the findings from a measure that is less influenced by sample size.

The evaluator's experience appears extensive and the budget seems reasonable for the amount of data collection and proposed analyses.

### Weaknesses:

Most of the research questions pertaining to student outcomes do not take advantage of the complicated sampling strategy proposed; in fact, comparison questions between treatment and any control groups are not asked in four of the seven student focused questions and appear to be aggregated across treatment and control conditions as well as school sites. By only asking about general students and overall rates compared to national averages the rigor of the sample selection is not used and findings will not be informative. Such questions are of larger interest as descriptive information but should not be the focus of this evaluation. Only two questions (4 and 6) separate out treatment students and question 7 is qualitatively focused on treatment/intervention activities. The two questions that do ask specifically about treatment students appear to compare this group to either national averages (#4) or the whole school (#6) rather than the control groups

which again negates the rigor of the sample selection process.

Although specific variables are listed for the matching of treatment and control schools no detail about the matching process is provided which would be necessary to evaluate the appropriateness of the matching strategy (for example, propensity score matching).

It is unclear with what threshold college credit taking (12 credits) will be evaluated; in some places in the narrative the goal is 95% (i.e., the abstract) and in others it is 50% (i.e., p.2) so evaluation of the appropriateness and reasonableness of this success goal for the evaluation (college credits in particular) is not possible.

**Reader's Score:** 13

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